

Old age - Societies, etc

# NCOA

*The National Council On the Aging*

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**Toward a  
Better Life  
in the  
Later Years...**

[New York, 1962]

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

"... The experience, capacities, and wisdom of our older citizens constitute one of our Nation's fundamental strengths. This administration believes that new opportunities for service must be opened to older citizens; that they must be encouraged to make their full contribution to the life and strength of the Nation; and that those who require it must receive help in coping with individual problems that they cannot solve alone.

"The Federal Government alone cannot achieve this goal. An intensified effort by States, communities, private organizations, and individuals will be needed to achieve adequate opportunities and help for older people. The National Council on the Aging, and other organizations like it, are making a valuable contribution to this nationwide effort.

"I am confident that in the nineteen sixties your organization will reach new heights of service to the older citizens of America.



JOHN F. KENNEDY

*From a letter sent by the President of  
The United States to The National Council  
on the Aging on the occasion of NCOA's  
eleventh annual meeting.*

## THE SITUATION TODAY

- There are now about 17 million men and women who are 65 or over. In a number of states they represent over 11 per cent of the entire population. In some states they represent over 20 per cent of the population 21 years and above.
- Every year in the United States about 2 million people reach their 65th birthday. The net annual increase in the population of those 65 or over is approximately 426,000 or the equivalent of a good-sized city.
- The number of persons 85 years and over has increased 920 per cent since 1920.
- Today over 70 per cent of the men 65 or over are not in paid employment; the proportion of women is, of course, even higher.

In spite of the billions of dollars spent on tax-supported and privately financed pensions, many older people have such small incomes that they live under sub-standard conditions and cannot maintain the buying power on which the healthy economic life of the community depends. In 1960, 65 per cent of all people age 65 or over had annual incomes of less than \$1,000. On the other hand, those retired people who do have ample incomes find that money alone is not sufficient to insure a comfortable and happy old age.

One of the major personal and social problems of today is emerging from the number of years people spend in retirement without a work schedule to utilize the greater portion of their time and without means to participate fully in the life of the community. Both the individual and society have yet to understand the significance of this situation and the enor-



*"If it is sensible for the child to make  
an effort to learn how to be an adult,  
then it is essential for the adult to  
learn how to be aged."*

**—DR. EDWARD STIEGLITZ**

*Photographed by Robert L. Beckhard for  
The National Council on the Aging.*

mous toll resulting from the community's failure to utilize the potential of its older people.

Research is urgently needed to fill the gaps in our knowledge about many aspects of aging. A larger number of competent personnel, skilled in working with the aging, is essential. Guide lines to assist communities and groups in thinking, planning, and acting to advance the well-being of older people must be prepared.

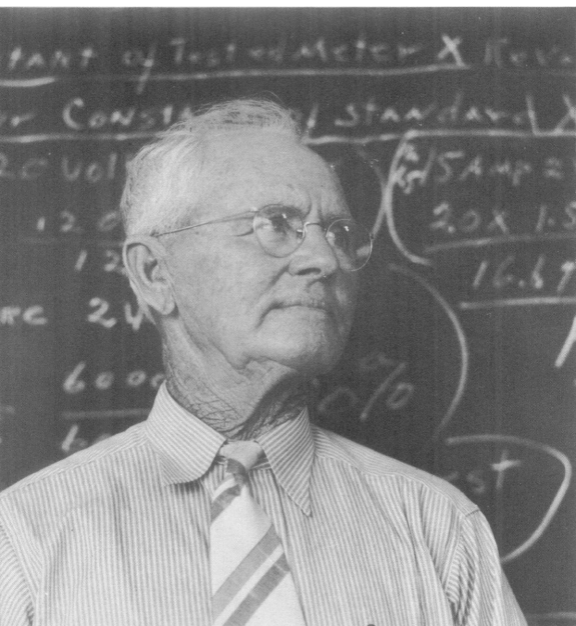
## **THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE AGING**

### ***What It Is***

The National Council on the Aging is a national, voluntary agency providing leadership for organizations and individuals concerned with the field of aging. It provides the medium through which all interests can work together in clarifying need, setting standards, and finding practical solutions to problems. It was organized at the request of community leaders, professional and civic groups, government agencies, and others who were attempting to deal unassisted with complex problems at the grass roots level. For an initial period, during which it explored the nature and extent of the need for its services, The Council was a standing committee of the National Social Welfare Assembly.

By 1960 the requests for service and special studies had far outgrown the resources to meet them. It thus became necessary to charter an independent, non-profit organization—The National Council on the Aging. This organization became operational in January, 1961, and received tax-exempt status six months later.

*"I am not young enough to know  
everything."—BARRIE*



The Council's expanded program of service provides membership participation for leaders representing business, labor, social welfare, education, health, and religion, among others. There are individual lay members as well as representatives of voluntary and governmental organizations at all levels.

With twelve years of sound experience, The National Council on the Aging now stands as a qualified, nationally and internationally recognized body to which diverse interests turn for objective judgment, creative thinking, and authoritative materials in planning sound policy and programs of action.

### ***What It Does***

The Council has concerned itself not so much with pronouncements of abstract principles as with providing practical guidance and developing standards and materials which enable people to do a better job in relatively new and uncharted areas of work.

In carrying out its program The Council deals with the areas of employment, retirement, health, housing, institutional care, social services, education, recreation, and community planning and development.

NCOA recognizes that the older person is a single entity and that his various needs cannot be dealt with separately. The unique contribution of The Council is its ability to bring together in coordinated fashion all facets that relate to any single problem area. It maintains a staff of qualified consultants in the areas mentioned above and also calls upon the resources of its members in carrying out its program. Among the ways The Council works are the following:

*A natural phenomenon:  
Dignity in old age.*

*Photograph through the courtesy of Chas. Pfizer & Co., Inc.*



## INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION

NCOA continuously gathers and disseminates information based on the best experience it can find at the source. Through its library service and a staff of consultants in specialized fields, it aids communities and organizations to plan and carry out effective programs for older people. It has developed a national resource file of speakers, writers, and leaders in the field of aging.

Consultation is provided regularly by telephone, letter, and personal interview. Illustrations of the scope of this program area include consultation with:

- A manufacturer on furniture design
- A manager of public housing on mobilization of community services for elderly tenants
- A real estate concern and its finance company on standards and services to be considered in developing a chain of nursing homes
- A community committee on aging on how to initiate an active service program

The Council Library — the only one of its kind — has an organized collection of printed materials relating to an aging population, with emphasis on the psycho-social, economic, and health aspects. It offers a rich collection of unpublished reports and documents recording experiences with programs for older people. A major service of the Library is its quarterly publication, *Selected Acquisttions*, which calls attention to pertinent new publications in the field. It prepares bibliographies for special areas of interest, provides a loan service and facilities for study and research.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

Special projects are pioneering efforts to find practical guides to the solution of major problems, for example:

*Standards of Care for Older People in Institutions.* The *first* comprehensive delineation of philosophy, standards, and regulatory procedures in homes for the aged and nursing homes.

*Planning Homes for the Aged.* The *first* authoritative resource for architects and board members based on modern concepts of care and building design. A feature of this project was an international competition for the design of a Home for the Aged.

*Criteria for Retirement.* The *first* exploration into what yardsticks in addition to age now exist or need to be developed to determine how long and under what conditions older workers should continue in employment or be retired.

*Centers for Older People.* The *first* guide to the philosophy, administration, program, staff, and physical facilities of a multi-service center for older people.

*Principles and Criteria for Determining Medical Indigency.* The *first* project to develop, on a national basis, principles and criteria for the determination of financial eligibility for free or part-pay medical and dental care. These criteria would serve as standards for official and voluntary agencies and institutions in determining eligibility for completely or partially subsidized medical care.

*Guardianship and Protective Service.* The *first* coordinated approach by lawyers,

Center. It brought together builders, architects, physical and social planners to provide current knowledge and trends in housing for older people; to give practical consideration to site selection, construction, and design; and to acquaint participants with national, state, and local programs which facilitate production of such housing.

- In a seminar on Community Planning, the following organizations joined in sponsorship, under NCOA leadership and administration:

American Public Welfare Association

Family Service Association of America

National Institute of Mental Health

United Community Funds and  
Councils of America

Bureau of Family Services, and  
Bureau of Old-Age and Survivors  
Insurance, U. S. Department  
of Health, Education, and Welfare

Brandeis University served as host.

## **CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS**

The Council provides the auspice for on-going exchange of experience and ideas for more than 200 civic, professional, and welfare organizations. This program is carried on by a representative committee and annual conference. Through these and other activities, national voluntary organizations are able to receive assistance in utilizing their services and facilities for older people and to participate in program areas of The National Council on the Aging with which they are concerned.

social workers, doctors, psychiatrists, and others to the problems of older people who cannot, unassisted, care for themselves or administer their own assets.

*Utilization of Older Professional and Scientific Workers.* The *first* examination of the extent to which this vital, national resource is being effectively used.

## **INSTITUTE, SEMINAR, AND WORKSHOP PROGRAM**

The purpose of this program is to distill, out of the best experience to date, guide lines and stimulation for future action. Meetings of many kinds are held — some dealing with one special subject; others, often conducted regionally, dealing with broad areas. Content material may be technical or more popular in nature. Various subjects dealt with are Housing; The Older Worker in an Industrial Community; Training of Social Welfare Personnel; Selective Retirement Procedures; Services to Older People in Small Communities and Rural Areas; Maintaining Human Potential for Effective and Useful Living; and Use of the Older Person as a Volunteer.

In accomplishing this program objective The Council frequently provides the medium through which governmental and voluntary organizations join in sponsorship and participation.

- Recently, a pioneering institute in Producing Housing for the Elderly was co-sponsored by The National Council on the Aging and the Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, in cooperation with the National Housing

## AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF HOMES FOR THE AGING

Initiated and sponsored by NCOA, this Association provides for exchange of experience, solving problems, and improvement of services in the rapidly expanding field of non-profit institutional care of older people.

## INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

A program to exchange information with other countries is conducted by The International Committee of NCOA. This Committee is now made up of 44 Corresponding Members in 28 countries.

## PUBLICATIONS

Among The Council's most popular publications are the following:\*

*Building for Older People — Location, Construction, Financing, Administration.* The National Council on the Aging. 365 pp. A compilation of the proceedings of two conferences concerned with producing housing for older persons.

*Centers for Older People — Guide for Programs and Facilities.* Jean M. Maxwell. The National Council on the Aging. 120 pp. Includes concise, useful information on centers — their purpose, program administration, and construction.

*Flexible Retirement.* Edited by Geneva Mathiasen. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 226 pp. A review of policies and programs for industry and organized labor.

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\* A complete publications list is available upon request.

*Criteria for Retirement.* Edited by Geneva Mathiasen. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 260 pp. Report of the first national conference on retirement.

*Current Trends in Retirement.* R. Norman Sprague. The National Council on the Aging. Reprint of an article in the *American Association of Industrial Nurses Journal*. March, 1962.

*Planning Homes for the Aged.* Edited by Geneva Mathiasen and Edward H. Noakes. F. W. Dodge Corporation. 119 pp. Comprehensive planning guide on the problems of designing and building homes for the aged and infirm.

*Older Employees.* The National Council on the Aging. 72 pp. The report of a conference on retirement. One hundred representatives of major corporations considered mandatory, flexible, and selective retirement policies as well as preparation-for-retirement procedures.

*Library Service to the Aging.* Winifred Stone. The National Council on the Aging. Reprint of an article from the *Library Journal*. June, 1959.

*Maintaining Human Potential for Effective and Useful Living.* The National Council on the Aging. 80 pp. A symposium presented at The Council's tenth anniversary meeting as an affirmation of its effort to work towards the assurance of a dignified life for the older person.

*Standards of Care for Older People in Institutions.*

Section I. Suggested Standards for Homes for the Aged and Nursing Homes. 112 pp.

Section II. Methods of Establishing and Maintaining Standards in Homes for the Aged and Nursing Homes. 112 pp.

Section III. Bridging the Gap Between Existing Practices and Desirable Goals in Homes for the Aged and Nursing Homes. 112 pp.

## FILMS

*A Place to Live.* Dramatic presentation of the problem of the aged in our society today, with special emphasis on standards for Homes for the Aged. This film was the recipient of the Silver Reel Award and many other national and international awards.

*Preparation for the Later Years: Financial Planning.* The first in a series of films on preparation for retirement, this film received the Chris Award of the Columbus Film Festival. Other films in this series will deal with health, housing, and use of leisure time.

## DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The National Council on the Aging, in operation six years with a limited staff, was the basis for a study in 1956 by the Ford Foundation. As a result of this study, based on the recognized need of the country and NCOA's potential ability to meet this need, it received from the Ford Foundation an initial grant of \$500,000. In 1959 the Ford Foundation conducted another study of The Council to evaluate its progress. Thus, having demonstrated its ability and leadership, NCOA received a second appropriation of \$750,00. This has been the main support for The Council's recent programing. However, NCOA has received grants for specific, individual projects from other foundations with special interest in the field of aging, including the Frederick and Amelia Schimper Foundation, the Dorr Foundation, and the McGregor Fund. The Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company made a special allocation for the production of the film dealing with financial planning for retirement.

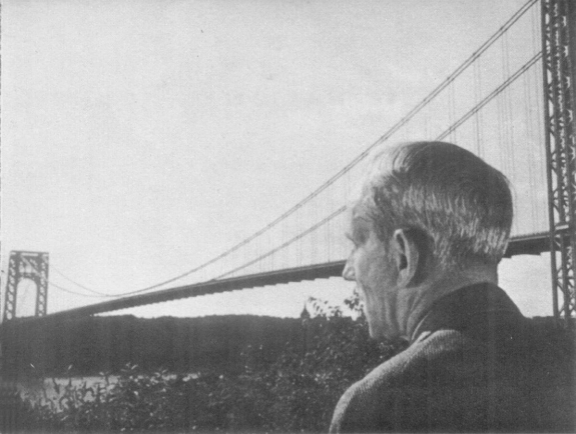
During the initial stages of The Council's activity, membership was limited and without financial participation. Now, however, under

a new membership policy, all persons working or actively interested in the field of aging are invited to join. Affiliation with NCOA enables members to actively participate in programs of The Council; to help provide The Council with a major source of financial support through annual dues and contributions; to draw strength from being associated with others interested in all areas of aging; and to make possible a united, integrated approach to the varied problems of older people.

## THE FUTURE

NCOA must continue to exercise leadership by helping the young understand and prepare for the later years; to promote sound relationships among the four generations; to give information and consultation which can improve the quality, number, and patterns of health and welfare services. It must continue to work with others to develop healthy attitudes on the part of the public toward aging; to prevent personal and family breakdown; to create a climate in which individuals of every age can realize their potential and find satisfactions and purpose throughout life — a climate in which age itself will be looked upon as a natural phenomenon, not as an economic, physical, and social disaster. Properly understood and prepared for, old age can indeed be the fulfillment of a dignified, healthy, and productive life.

The National Council on the Aging is serving and must continue to serve as the unique medium through which governmental and voluntary organizations at every level — industry, labor, physical and social planners, civic, religious, fraternal, lay and professional interests — can all work in close partnership to achieve these common goals.



*Indeed, the span of life is poorly built  
if it does not soundly reach to the  
far shore.*

*From The National Council on the Aging's film: "A Place to Live"*

### *An Invitation*

• All those working or interested in the field of aging are invited to membership in NCOA as participating and voting members.

Categories of membership include individual, organizational (non-profit), and corporate.

General support is invited also through contributions, memorials, legacies and bequests.

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